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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to create an instrument for systematically coding qualitative processes of children's cooperative and associative play. Data were gathered through observations of 16 preschool children ranging in age from 47 to 59 months and attending a day care center using the High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Model. A total of 20 hours of children's dialogues were recorded verbatim and a partial record of children's behavior was videotaped. Transcribed data were entered into a word processor in transcription format. Transcripts were cut into series of exchanges and affixed to index cards. Appropriate contextual notes were made on the cards. Exchanges on cards were then sorted according to similarities and recurring behaviors. The categories used in the coding system emerged from the sorting process. Guiding questions were used as references for establishing the parameters of each category. The 11 preliminary categories of social play which emerged from the sorting process were analytically reduced to 8. These categories included entering and establishing behaviors, ownership and object exchange, assistance seeking and providing, directing behaviors, declaring and extending behaviors, denying or offering friendship, comparison and display, and exiting and closing behaviors. Directions for further research are offered. (RH)

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OBSERVATIONS OF CHILDREN'S SOCIAL PLAY: THE BASIS FOR A SYSTEM OF CODING

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by

DIANA M. SCARSELLETTA

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN EDUCATION

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CHAPTER ONE

RATIONALE

Children's play is not a game, as evidenced by the abundance of research that has surfaced over the past two decades. Through play interactions, alone and with peers, the child dramatically expands knowledge of the self, the physical and social world, and systems of communication. Children's play is systematic and rule governed, it is the instinctive way in which a child begins to exercise skills necessary for adult life (Garvey, 1977).

In order to gain a fuller understanding of children's play, its determinants and consequences, the need exists to examine closely the interactions that occur. Realizing this need and recognizing the importance of play to child development, many studies have been done which seek to make comparisons and draw conclusions about children's play (Garvey, 1977; McLoyd, 1983; Marshall, 1983). The practical application of play to foster child development has been widely researched and discussed. Theories of play indicate that it is the predominant natural medium of learning during childhood years.

Although studies of children's play behaviors abound, there is an overwhelming tendency to accept the belief that children have difficulty taking the perspective of others. As a result of this belief, some research has failed to look

closely at the intricate components of children's interactions, and has accepted children's play as egocentric and of limited viewpoint (Goffin, 1987).

Cooperative behaviors, long known to be an integral part of children's free play, have been defined superficially with little attention given to the social and personal components of which it is comprised. It is known that in order for a play activity to be truly cooperative, each participant must contribute to the direction of the activity (Goffin, 1987). In order for all participants to establish or reach play goals, each participant must recognize the perspective of another child, and make compromises which allow for a mutually satisfying outcome. It is in making these compromises and working to resolve the conflicts which inevitably emerge, that children must communicate with each other, using skills that past research has failed to equate with childhood. When two or more participants actively seek to reach a goal, they must share ideas and materials, negotiate, bargain, make decisions and evaluate their own progress (Goffin, 1987). As children employ these skills and seek to fulfill a goal, they are using verbal and nonverbal cues to build social organization. Within this social organization, endless possibilities and problems arise (Newman, 1978). Despite the fact that educators and parents witness this in children's daily interactions, little research has been done to document that which occurs during episodes of cooperative and play.

As researchers continue to examine children's play, attempting to look closely at the interactions that occur, several problems with methodology, interpretation, definition and confounding variables need to be addressed if comparisons and descriptions of trends are to be made. A survey of related literature indicates that studies of children's play behaviors abound. What fails to surface in this review of literature is a consistent, comprehensive scale which observers can implement to observe and code systematic behaviors as they occur during episodes of free play. While some researchers design an a priori scale that is relevant only to the observable trait inherent in that study, a majority of the reviewed studies employed a vague checklist of behaviors that combines Smilansky's stages of developmental play with Parten's categories of play (Marshall, 1983; Roopnarine, 1983). The categories and stages of play as determined by both Smilansky and Parten will be addressed further in Chapter II.

It is not the intent of this paper to discredit in any way the studies of researchers who employ checklists to code the behaviors that they observe throughout their data gathering process. Checklists are valuable tools for assessing frequency, duration, or patterns of behaviors. However, accurate inferences cannot be drawn from isolated incidences of behavior or single observations. Each bit of behavior observed must be

thought of as a clue to understanding a subject, in this case a child (Phinney, 1982). Studies which employ checklists or other a priori systems of categorizing bring about two interesting issues which this author feels are necessary to address. The first issue is the manner in which play behaviors are observed and coded. Human behavior is not something which is easily categorized into a system of patterns which are the same for each person. Rather, that which is seemingly logical to one person may hold no logic or relevance to another. This is especially true of children's behavior, as adults often impose their own adult beliefs of what is moral, immoral or socially acceptable onto children's interactions with their peers. Research conducted using only a priori systems of classification fails to recognize the processes which unfolds as the interactions occur. Human nature is often studied in controlled settings, holding contextual factors constant (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

A second issue that becomes apparent as one examines studies of children's play behaviors is that of the coding systems that are employed. As noted earlier, these systems often encompass only two or three a priori categories. Because children's play is the very foundation for their development for adult life, the behaviors which comprise the development process can not be comprehensively coded into only two or three categories. As previously noted, episodes of

cooperative play behaviors have long been accepted at face value by researchers who have failed to examine the process and structure which comprise the episodes. Some researchers seek to examine only one minute aspect of play interactions, and utilize a data gathering tool which is designed for that singular purpose (Beavais,1982; Krasnor, 1983). However, if comparisons and descriptive studies are to be done which make generalizations about children's play, then the tool used to gather and code behaviors must encompass more than a minimal number of behaviors.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Researchers attempting to gather data which leads to a descriptive study of children's play interactions are faced with the lack of a tool which lends itself to such a study. A researcher utilizing an ethnographic paradigm will use himself or herself as the primary tool for the data gathering process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). An a priori scale is not employed and the focus of the study is subject to change as data gathering proceeds. Subsequent to the data gathering, open ended data analysis occurs, and the guiding hypotheses that have emerged throughout the study are addressed. While the results of a truly ethnographic study are qualitative, a resulting descriptive analysis may quantify reoccurring, important behaviors that have been predominant throughout the study.

The author does not know of an existing instrument which can be employed to code observable play behaviors, subsequent to an ethnographic data gathering process.

This is especially true in studies of play, as adult conceptions of children's activities and abilities are often imposed upon the child's interactions. Adults may underestimate the importance of that which is not understood or restructure occurrences to bring them in line with an adult view of the world (Corsaro, 1985). An ethnographic study, as proposed here, attempts to suspend such interpretations.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

At the outset of this study the original proposal was a descriptive study, falling within the naturalistic paradigm, comparing observable play behaviors of three-to-five-year-old children. Participants were to be from two preschool classrooms of similar design, the composition of the classes distinguished primarily by amount of parental income. A survey of literature failed to unveil a rating or coding scale which assessed variables of behavior beyond a minimal number of categories. Feeling that the existing systems of assessment were too limited in scope, and not wanting to employ an a priori scale that would predict which behaviors would be observed, the researcher redefined the study. The purpose of the study then became to design and test an instrument that would allow a researcher observing children's play to code

behaviors into a system that ideally encompasses a variety of significant behaviors. From this, the study needed to be further refined, as children's play behaviors occur within a variety of contexts, each of which lends itself to a different type of play.

At the outset of the data gathering process of this study, the purpose was to create an instrument which would allow researchers to systematically code qualitative processes of children's play. Approximately eight hours of data had been recorded when it was discovered by the researcher that many of the observed interactions were occurring between two or more children who were working at a mutual goal or sharing resources to reach an individual goal. These two types of interactions became the focus of the observations. As a result of this, the purpose of the study was refined to its final form: To create an instrument which would allow researchers to systematically code qualitative processes of children's cooperative and associative play interactions. Employing the belief that the interactions of the children will indicate to the researcher that which is "relevant" to assessment of children's play, the product of the study resulted from the data which were collected. The terms cooperative and associative were defined for the purposes of this study, utilizing the collected data and refining definitions that emerged from literature about children's play. Use of the terms cooperative and associative are discussed further in Chapter III.

Before the original proposal of this study can be addressed, the development and refining of an applicable coding instrument is paramount. Systems of classifications utilized in previous studies were not disregarded in the development of the resulting product of this study. Data were collected during episodes of free play, and the observer utilized field notes and video tapes to guide the development of the coding instrument.

ASSUMPTIONS

The nature of this study lends itself to a combination of inductive and deductive processes. Inherent in this is an understanding of the naturalistic methodology which is employed as part of this study. The assumption is made that there is a basic understanding of the implications of an ethnographic study, which is explained further in Chapter III.

In applying the scale that is the result of this study, it is crucial that the researcher be adequately familiar with the system and appropriately trained in the use of it. Paralleling this, the assumption has been made that research of the past has utilized valid systems of classification and methodological biases were few.

Inherent to any study of play is the problem of determining exactly how play will be defined. For the purposes of this study, play has been defined encompassing Garvey's

inventory of play descriptors:

> Play is pleasurable, enjoyable. Even when not actually accompanied by signs of mirth, it is still positively valued by the player.
>
> Play has no extrinsic goals. Its motivations are intrinsic and serve no other objectives.
>
> Play is spontaneous and voluntary. It is not obligatory but is freely chosen by the player.
>
> Play involves some active engagement on the part of the player.
>
> Play has certain systematic relations to what is not play. (1977, p. 4)

It is virtually impossible to set forth one or two sentences that are a comprehensive definition of play. Rather, it is a combination of the outlined elements which provide a framework for analysis in this paper. It has been assumed that persons utilizing the instrument which has resulted from this undertaking have accepted the criterion for defining play as outlined here.

LIMITATIONS

A variety of limitations extend from the manner in which the scale was devised. A limited population was observed for a total period of 20 hours. An additional five hours were utilized to make entry as an observer as suggested by Corsaro (1985). Only pilot field notes were gathered during these five hours and they were recorded upon leaving the classroom. A limitation stems from the established 20 hour observation time, in that the free play time which was observed was limited.

It was not intended that the observed population would be randomly selected; therefore it was not inherently a representative sample of three-to-five-year-old children. The observations were gathered at The Sibley Child Care Center on the State University of New York at Plattsburgh campus. Extensive examination of the guiding philosophy, amount of free play time, amount of adult intervention, and demographics of the group and setting are addressed in Chapter III. The composition and contextual factors of the classroom present a limitation that may make the resulting scale not applicable or meaningful to other investigations. The manner in which the coding system has been devised lends itself to descriptive or comparative studies of play, allowing for a broader scope of cooperative and associative behaviors to be compared than has been done in past studies of play.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The earliest step in the design of this study was a carefully executed literature search. The initial source consulted was the Current Index to Journals in Education (CIJE), noting primarily journal articles from the past five years. Preliminary descriptors that were used to locate relevant literature included: play, free play behaviors, social interaction, scales, and coding systems. Drawing from the bibliographies of journal articles and the suggestions of professors and researchers in the field of children's play, the next step was to consult books written on the subject. Many of the books that will be reviewed later in this chapter were written up to 10 years ago, but the research has proven to be grounded and valid. Many of the theories and suggestions put forth in the books have been the basis for further research as found in the journal articles.

The next step in the literature search portion of this project was to have a computer search of the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database done by the staff of Feinberg Library. The computer search generated 20 documents, primarily journal articles and unpublished education research reports. The same descriptors as noted above were used; however, the terms Ethnographic Studies and Naturalistic Inquiry were added. Many of the documents were very valuable to the search and are described below.

A great deal of existing research has centered upon and drawn from the works of Sara Smilansky (McLoyd, 1982). In her studies of the effects of sociodramatic play on disadvantaged children, Smilansky set forth four basic categories of play through which children progress naturally. To delineate between the various types of play that children engage in, Smilansky set forth the following categories:

FUNCTIONAL PLAY

During this stage of play, the child repeats and manipulates his actions which consist primarily of simple muscular activities. The child manipulates play objects, language and physical activity to gain experience which facilitates his interactions with and knowledge of the immediate environment. Through functional play, the child learns his physical capabilities and explores the environment.

CONSTRUCTIVE PLAY

At this stage of play the child is introduced to creative activity and the intrinsic joy of creation. The child's activities move from functional to "creation producing." As Smilansky states, "Development from functional play to constructive play is progression from manipulation of the form to formation" (1977, p. 4). The child expresses his activity through creations and recognizes himself as creator.

DRAMATIC PLAY

Through dramatic play the child progresses into the next stage of play development which is symbolic play. It is at this

stage that the child freely displays his physical prowess and his developing social awareness. The child simultaneously becomes actor, observer and participator, which has great value in increasing his/her social development.

GAMES WITH RULES

According to Smilansky, this is the highest stage reached in the progression of play development. The child accepts prearranged rules and is forced to control his actions, behavior, and emotions within given limits.

Despite the equal importance of all stages in the development of play interactions, "Games With Rules" is not be addressed for the purposes of this paper.

The statement Smilansky (1968) makes at the outset of her research is that children from underprivileged homes lack sequence in their activities and use of language. Smilansky regards this difference in elaboration of concepts between underprivileged and privileged children as a result of direct environmental influences. She proposes that there is a way to help underprivileged children relate scattered experiences and isolated concepts that they already possess and convert them into new conceptual schemes. To this end, she proposes the use and development of sociodramatic play. It is through role play that the child draws from the knowledge acquired by observing situations and people.

In Smilansky's 1968 study, five field workers observed 36 kindergarten and nursery school classes of children aged three to six years. In 18 classes, the children were of middle to high sociocultural background (denoted as A classes). The remaining 18 classes were comprised of children of low sociocultural background (denoted as D classes). Field workers recorded the content of play, noting objects used, the form and process of play, the number of children participating, and the verbalizations of the children. Examples were recorded from various centers of activity in the classrooms.

The recorded field notes revealed differences in the character and content of the sociodramatic play of the two groups. The comparison was broken down into five categories of sociodramatic play and major conclusions were set forth. Children of lower classes engage in less and poorer quality sociodramatic play than their middle class peers. Smilansky posited that these deficits develop as a result of parental attitudes and practices and are related to verbal, cognitive, and social abilities. The development of these skills can be facilitated by training adults in the techniques of sociodramatic play.

Smilansky's study of the effects of sociodramatic play on disadvantaged preschool children was extensive. A quantitative analysis of speech during play was performed, and observations on age and sociodramatic play and IQ and sociodramatic play

were made. Her work has been the foundation for many recent studies and the stages of play as outlined above have been the underlying concept in the development of a variety of rating scales used in such research.

Roopnarine and Johnson (1983) examined the nature and degree of social interaction that actually occurs among children in a mixed age setting. Exploring children's play interactions with agemates and non-agemates, the researchers examined the developmental significance of cross-age social interaction and possible educational implications of grouping children of varying cognitive and social emotional levels.

Twenty two three-to-eight-year-old children were participants in the study. The children had no previous experience in mixed age classrooms. The participants were grouped in three strata: eight preschoolers, nine kindergarteners and five school-aged children. Subjects were from middle and upper middle socioeconomic backgrounds, and there were 21 white and one black participant. The children were enrolled in an eight week experimental program in a University of Wisconsin Preschool laboratory. The classrooms were divided into activity areas, containing objects and materials conducive to various forms of cognitive and social play.

Observations began after the children had been together for four weeks. A total of 220 five minute observations were

made over the remaining four week period. During observation periods, children were free to move around the room and engage in a variety of activities. Roopnarine and Johnson decided to focus on kindergarten aged children, as the researchers rationalized that the kindergarteners had equal opportunity to engage in play with both younger and older participants. Four observers used a checklist to record the play activities, noting the play of the target child and the name of play partners. Observations focused upon Smilansky's (1968) cognitive play categories and Parten's (1932) social play categories. Observers watched for twenty seconds, recorded behaviors for the next ten seconds. Inter-rater reliability had a mean agreement of 79% with a range of 62-93%.

The results of the observations showed that kindergarteners engaged primarily in interactive dramatic play. More time was spent interacting with peers as opposed to being parallel to them during play. The majority of the kindergartners exhibited sociodramatic play (55%), 13% engaged in parallel constructive play and 12% engaged in interactive constructive play. Thirty-three percent of the kindergarteners' play time was spent with preschoolers, 40% was spent with other kindergarteners and 27% was spent with school-aged children.

It was found that considerable cross age play did occur, but that it varied according to the type of play. Overall, more time was spent in play interactions with non-agemates (60%) than with agemates.

Marshall (1983) designed a descriptive, observational study which utilized the tenets and classifications of play set forth by Parten in 1932. Marshall's study described the behavior of two-year-olds in groups on the basis of social participation, contrasting it with that of three-year-olds in the 1980's and to the behavior of two-to three-year-olds in Parten's study.

Free play periods were observed by 11 trained observers. The observers recorded the frequencies of various types of play behavior utilizing Parten's categories of social participation, encompassing the six following behaviors:

Unoccupied: Child is not playing, but watching others play when something exciting is happening. Otherwise, he or she is standing around.

Onlooker: The child is not playing but watching with interest as other children play. He or she may talk with the other children being watched.

Solitary/Independent: The child is playing alone with different toys than the others around. He or she is not talking with nearby children.

Parallel: The child plays independently with toys like those of children near, but there is not an attempt to influence them or their play.

Associative: The children play together. There is conversation and borrowing of toys. There is not division of labor, organization or a recognized leader.

Cooperative: The child plays in a group that organized for the purpose of making some material project, reaching a goal, dramatizing a situation or playing formal games.

The six categories were used in a time sampling observation to record the children's behavior. A computer generated random selection of the names. Each observer was provided daily with two coding sheets with the children's names, placed in random order, and a cassette recorder. The observations began when the children arrived for the day. One minute of observations were made, followed by one minute of coding. The observer then moved on to the next name on the list, until all children on the sheet had been observed.

Findings revealed that social participation of two-year-olds as a group was most frequently categorized as solitary or parallel play. Three-year-olds also engaged most frequently in solitary and parallel play, but the differences in scores of associative and cooperative play were significantly higher for the three-year-olds than for the two-year-olds.

Also compared in the study were gender differences within the age groups. Two-year-old boys engaged in more unoccupied, solitary and parallel play than did the girls. In comparing her findings to Parten's, Marshall noted that there is a significant difference ($p < .05$) in the types of play that Parten found as compared to those in the Marshal study.

In a study of non-social play in preschoolers, Kenneth Rubin set out to identify forms of non-social play in four-year-olds which correlated either positively or negatively with assessments of competence in the social, social-cognitive, and cognitive domains (1982). Examining correlations between non-social behaviors and the type of play that they most frequently resulted in, Rubin observed 53 male and 69 female four year old children who attended preschool or daycare. Each child was observed for a total of 30 minutes during free play (six 10 second time intervals over 30 days). Behaviors were coded on a checklist which included the categories of Smilansky and Parten. Subsequent to coding the behavior the observer noted the names of the focal child's play or conversation partners and which participant initiated the activity.

Following Furman, Rahe and Hartup (1979), the affective quality of each social interchange was coded as positive, neutral, or negative. Drawing from the rating scale of Asher, Singleton, Tinsley and Hymel (1979) each child was given one total rating score based on the category to which their classmates assigned them using Polaroid photographs. A battery of appropriate tests was administered to assess social competence as well as role taking and social problem solving skills.

Findings indicated that solitary-constructive play was negatively correlated with the number of peer overatures received and the number of peer conversations held during free

play. The tendency for four-year-olds is to use social rather than non-social dramatic play. Fantasy and dramatic play at four years of age is generally carried out with or near other children. An absence of this type of interaction may be indicative of a lag in the development of social and cognitive skills. Some non-social activities (i.e., solitary-functional, solitary-dramatic, and parallel-functional play) did correlate negatively with indices of social, social-cognitive and cognitive skills. It was found that parallel-constructive play is highly predictive of competence.

Krasnor and Rubin (1983) observed that a major portion of children's interactions with peers is composed of social problem solving. Social problem solving (SPS) was defined as the process of achieving personal goals through social interaction. Within a SPS framework, problem was defined as achievement of a goal state, such as obtaining possession of a toy, eliciting the assistance of a specific other person or initiating conversation.

Fifteen preschoolers, from two different schools, were observed for five hours each, in an attempt to identify social problem solving attempts. A total of 6,338 SPS attempts were identified and coded for target, strategy, goal and outcome. From these four components, the potential outcome of the SPS attempt were drawn. The observers followed a focal child to obtain narrative recordings of naturally occurring verbal and

non-verbal SPS behavior. Each child was observed for a total of five hours in ten 30 minute sessions. The observers narrated the child's actions into a microphone, then transcribed the narrations and marked them with ten second intervals. SPS attempts were identified, using three pre-determined criteria from relevant literature.

Results indicated that SPS goals, strategies and outcomes can be reliably observed during naturalistic interaction and that SPS constituted a major component of observed preschooler's interactions. In both of the observed preschool samples, more SPS attempts were directed at eliciting specific other actions, such as obtaining assistance or directing play, than identified goals. More SPS attempts were directed at peers than teachers and most were directed at same sex peers. Fifty-seven percent of the attempts were found to be successful, which Krasnor and Rubin noted was typical but not necessarily optimal. Further discussion of the data noted the importance of SPS behaviors ($p < .05$) as a general dimension for social competence, when studied with the social acceptability of the behavior.

In a study of sharing behaviors in preschool, Beavais, Worden and Simovich (1982) found that instances of successful sharing interchanges were infrequent. A total of 116 preschool children, aged three to five years of age were observed for one-half hour periods in 17 classrooms of four preschools.

Sharing was defined as interchanges in which the original holder grants another child the partial use or possession of an object or thing. All observations were taken during periods of unstructured activity or free play. During the 30 minute interval, observers waited for interchanges to occur, then recorded age and sex of participants, the type of initiation, the response, and the outcome. The observers were positioned so that they would be unobtrusive in the interactions.

Analysis of the data showed that the predominant exchange was physical grabbing followed by a refusal to share (68%). Refusals to share were largely ineffective since initiators frequently managed to obtain by force the object that they wanted. However, when sharing did occur, it was usually in response to a verbal request. Participants exhibited a strong tendency to interact with same sex partners, and same sex and cross-sex partners were found to be similar in their overwhelming tendency not to share.

Despite the finding that verbal initiations were relatively infrequent, Beavais et al. found that responders were prone to oblige verbal requests with sharing. In contrast, physical initiations lead almost exclusively to refusals. Instances of successful sharing interchanges were quite infrequent. It was concluded that the average preschooler probably engages in very few successful sharing experiences in the preschool environment. Preschoolers do not

readily give up their possessions. In 77% of the observations, the participants tried to avoid sharing, mostly by physically guarding their objects. The study also looked at same sex and cross sex interactions, finding that there was not a great tendency to differ overwhelmingly in their tendency to refuse requests to share.

In a study of play environments, Moore sets forth that it is through feedback from interaction with the environment that the child develops (1983). In correspondence with Piaget's theory (1951), Moore relates Piaget's four functional invariants--adaptation, assimilation, accommodation and equilibration--to the child's direct involvement with his/her physical environment. It is through child initiated play that the child is most often free to explore, test and learn from feedback in the environment. This feedback facilitates the child's natural progression through the developmental stages as expounded by Piaget. In his study, Moore seeks to examine which physical play equipment most readily lends itself to spontaneous play. The findings of Moore's study are not directly relevant to the focus of this study; however, the underlying concepts of the importance of environment to the types of play that children engage in is congruent with the rationale set forth in this study. Accurate inferences about children's play cannot be made without careful consideration of the environment in which the actions are occurring and being observed.

Helping behaviors are an integral part of children's free play behaviors and have been studied by Bar-Tal as one category of prosocial behavior (1982). In his study, Bar-Tal observed the circumstances and conditions of helping behaviors and the influence of these variables on the quality of the behavior.

Seventy-six boys and 80 girls between the ages of 18.3 to 76.4 months were observed in five nursery schools and three kindergartens of similar setting and philosophy. Children were observed for 10 minutes during their free play activity. Each observer was equipped with a clipboard and data sheets to code the observations. When the observers completed their 10 minute observation on one child, they moved onto the next. They were instructed to record (during the 10 minute episode) the frequencies of social contacts that the child made. If the social contact involved a helping act, its nature was also recorded in accordance with the predetermined categories. The circumstances surrounding the helping behavior were also coded as well as the reinforcement conditions of the act.

Results indicated that there was no sex difference in the data, so data from males and females were combined for analysis. It was found that for the investigated range of ages, helping behavior does not change dramatically. The percentage of children carrying out at least one helping act was above 65% in each age group except one (43 to 54 months). It was noted that helping acts in a play situation decrease with age, as does imaginative play (Singer, 1973). As Bar-Tal

pointed out, as children grow older, their capacity for games with rules increases. This in turn causes fewer acts of unstructured play, which would affect the ages of the children observed during episodes of free play in his study. However, children as young as 20 months can initiate a helping act. Most of the children in the study initiated a helping act themselves, and most were not promised an external reward prior to initiation.

The literature presented here represents a variety of studies, the majority of which have found a limited aspect of children's free play behaviors to examine extensively. The representative sample of literature reinforces the belief of the author that the interactions which occur during children's play interactions are diverse and influential in their social development; therefore, a more extensive, comprehensive system of categorizing and coding observations is necessary.

The literature which has been reviewed up to this point in the chapter was consulted prior to the outset of the data gathering process. As noted in Chapter I, the data which were gathered early in the study seemed to indicate that interactions between two or more preschool aged children were frequent and complex. Many of the interactions involved conflict resolution and the children employed a variety of means by which they sought to reach a solution. This discovery lead to the decision to consult again existing literature, as

descriptors used in the preliminary literature search may have been too broad. A second set of descriptors were established in order to extend the literature review. The set of descriptors used in the first search were expanded to include cooperative play, associative play, social interaction, and peer interaction. This new set of descriptors was the basis for a second ERIC database search. Although the findings, as revealed in the discussion that follows, are relevant to studies of play, most of the literature which surfaced again failed to focus exclusively on cooperative and associative play behaviors in preschool children.

Of the 19 documents generated by the second ERIC search, only six dealt specifically with topics of immediate relevance to this study. Many of the articles generated in the search dealt with atypical social behaviors or the influence of biological factors on play behaviors. Although these studies are very important in furthering an understanding of play behavior, the topics they present are beyond the scope of this study and are not presented in this chapter. The review of related literature has been expanded to include the documents which follow.

Recognizing that peer social relations are a major vehicle by which young children acquire important social skills, Connolly and Doyle (1979) designed a study to examine the interrelationship between behavioral and inferential social competence measures. The researchers sought to

increase understanding of the social competence construct by simultaneously applying behavioral (observations of qualitative and quanitative social interaction dimensions) and inferential (peer and teacher ratings) measures for the same group of children.

Sixty-six full time day care children ranging from 31 to 64 months participated in the sample group. Each child was assessed on five measures of social competence. Three of the measures were inferential and two were behavioral. Two subtests of the WPPSI(Weschler Primary and Preschool Inventory) were administered in order to obtain an index of intellectual maturity. Data were collected during episodes of free play over a three month period. Scores for each child in each category were the sums of the frequencies across five separate 10 minute samples.

The data were analyzed based on a procedure designed for the investigation of relationships between multiple data sets. Behavioral and inferential measures were each treated as a data set. The data sets were submitted to a factor analysis which considered the relationship between the factors of both sets simultaneously.

The within set factor analysis of behavioral variables suggested that social competence could not be measured by a single dimension. Three qualitative aspects of the interaction emerged: the ability to formulate a social bid, a child's assertiveness over other children in the classroom,

and the capacity to use language in formulating a social gesture. These three variables all appear to be important characteristics of social competence. The greatest overlap in similarities was found between behavioral measures defining qualitative dimensions of social interactions and inferential measures defining development status and teacher or peer perceived social competence.

As a result of the study, Connolly and Doyle concluded that simultaneous usage of several of the measures employed would greatly enhance the discriminatory power of the measures. The findings indicated that not all measures overlap, nor do all of the measures tap the same dimensions of social competence. The findings indicate, as the authors point out, that further study of the growth of social behaviors and the use of multiple measures in future research.

Recognizing that children's speech provides important insights into the nature of children's social development, Newman (1978) examined the use of language by a group of nursery school children in their construction of social interaction. In his study, Newman focused upon ownership to illustrate children's social organization. To clarify the framework for examining the childrens' social activities, Newman refers to ownership as a social fact. A "social fact" is defined by Newman as "any recognized state of affairs for which shared recognition is a necessary condition" (1978, p. 215). Newman proposes that shared recognition of ownership

is evidenced by the children's use of possessive pronouns. The focus of Newman's study was to consider the possibility of describing some of the social functions of young children's verbal utterances which occur as social organization is produced.

Four boys and three girls, ranging in age from 37 to 42 months, were videotaped during episodes of free play. A focal child was selected as the target for each session, and approximately four hours of videotaped interactions were transcribed for the study. After careful analysis of the four hour videotaped interactions, a 16-minute segment was selected for a detailed analysis in the study. The transcribed segment included descriptions of nonverbal actions. Newman found that the recorded videotaped segment displayed an orderliness. The goal of the study was to document the order by careful analysis of the children's verbal and nonverbal behaviors throughout the videotaped segment.

Newman explicitly presents his findings in four sections: Orientation to Episodes of Ownership, The Mechanics of Making Episodes Public, Re-establishing and Directing Episodes, and Permission, Turn-taking, and Ownership. Newman found that throughout the course of their social interaction the participants in his study were confronted with the particular problem of carrying on play in the midst of a larger group. The play group's composition was continually subject to negotiation and dispute. In his analysis of the interactions,

Newman also found that the participants were recognized by all of the children as the joint owners of play objects, and permission requests by the outsiders showed their recognition of ownership of the play objects by the participants. Newman's findings in his analysis of the videotaped data were extensive. A major finding which Newman presents is that the functions of language and the social organization which it creates cannot be studied independent of each other. The organizational possibilities of social behavior are immense, as Newman's thorough analysis of the data indicates.

It can be easily recognized that existing literature which examines children's play behavior is extensive. A variety of aspects have been the focus of broad and narrow studies of play. Despite the variety of literature which has been presented in this chapter, one consistent similarity is seen within all of the studies: Children's play is an intricate process. It is a process that researchers must continue to study. Each of the studies presented in this chapter contributed to the execution of the study which follows in Chapters III, IV and V. While it has been important to be aware of the findings presented throughout the review of related literature, it was also important for the researcher to recognize that the literature search was not exhaustive. What has been presented in Chapter II provides a basis from which this and future studies of children's play can draw upon.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Two predominant theories of socialization are traditionally accepted. Knowledge of these theoretical perspectives contribute to an understanding of the properties which accompany the process of building social structure. The first view, primarily behavioristic in nature, defines socialization as children's internalization of adult skills and knowledge. The emphasis in this theory is on imitation and modeling as the crucial mechanisms in human learning and development. The presence of an adult role model--caretaker, parent, teacher--is the guiding input in the child's developmental processes as outlined by theorists who follow a behaviorist approach; the underlying assumption being that the child is shaped and molded by adults (Youniss, 1980).

The second view of socialization sets forth the belief that the child is an integral part of the socialization process, interacting with information from the environment to process and acquire or construct adult skills. This perspective has been termed both constructivist and interactionist, because children actively construct their social skills and acquire skills and knowledge through through their interactions with others (Corsaro, 1985).

Adult models and reinforcement are important inputs to

children, and the two theories presented above both recognize this. The point of view adopted by the author accepts the constructionist/interactionist perspective. The numerous informational inputs, as well as the continually changing perspectives, cannot be ignored when studying human behavior, especially that of children.

The inability to ignore all of the factors of environment and context have lead to the emergent design of this study. Adopting and adapting what is known as a Naturalistic Paradigm (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the goal of the study was to produce the basis for a system for coding children's play interactions. The notion of "designing" a naturalistic study is somewhat paradoxical in that naturalistic studies often change form and the original focus is altered. The concern of conventional researchers that "the variances will be hopelessly confounded" does not exist in naturalistic inquiry; rather the naturalistic inquirer finds these changes constructive and relies upon them to enhance the emergent nature of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As noted in the previous chapter, a search of related literature was the primary step, once the focus of the study had been established. The process of executing the literature search has been outlined previously. Upon completion of a survey of related literature, the study, as presented below, was submitted for committee approval and input.

SUBJECT IDENTIFICATION

The sample population observed for this study were 16 preschoolers ranging in age from 47 to 59 months (X=52). The site for the gathering of data was The Sibley Child Care Center located on The State University of New York at Plattsburgh campus. The site was chosen based upon its guiding philosophy of child education. A second consideration was proximity. The observed participants were predominantly white and attended the Child Care Center daily from Monday through Friday. The Child Care Center employed the High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Model which is based on the theory of Jean Piaget. The goal of the High/Scope model is to produce a framework for what its founders call "developmentally valid education." Inherent in reaching this goal is acceptance of the assumption that human beings develop capacities in predictable sequences throughout life. These developing potentials are challenged and facilitated by sound learning environments. The High/Scope Curriculum Model seeks to develop the child's ability to make choices and decisions, to develop self discipline, to enhance children's ability to work together, and develop their creativity and initiative. In order to meet these and other long term goals, the High/Scope model establishes a daily routine for the classroom, based upon four principles.

The daily routine:

-is designed to provide a consistent routine which helps the children maintain order in their lives and develop internal controls.

-is focused on the child's needs, which include active involvement and decision making. It also allows for teaching to occur in an orderly setting.

-provides an avenue for children to become responsible for creating materials and activities for their own learning..

-provides for a variety of interactions between child and adult.

The elements which make up the daily routine allow for flexibility and sensitivity to the needs of the children. The daily routine is composed of planning time during which the children dictate to the teacher activities which they are going to do and what resources will be used to carry out the plans. Work time is designed to allow the children time to carry out their plans. During recall time the children present that which they did during work time. During small group time, the children participate in an activity which is presented by the teacher. The whole group meets together with an adult for a variety of experiences during large group or circle time. Time is also allotted for meals, naps, snack, outside time, and cleanup time within the daily routine. The High/Scope Preschool Curriculum Model is very comprehensive and a thorough discussion of it is not within the scope of this paper.

The role of the adult within the daily routine is clearly outlined by the High/Scope Model. The University day care center employs one full-time adult per every seven children.

Thus, two adults were present at any given time during the day. The staff employed by the center subscribe to the principles of High/Scope and their intervention during the children's episodes of free play was minimal. A main requisite of this study has that children's play behaviors be spontaneous and naturally occurring and, as such, need to be observed in the child's most natural environment.

SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The directors of the Child Care Center did not require that the researcher receive written permission from the parents of the children in the classroom which was used in the study. Rather the Child Care Center exercised a policy which allowed researchers and observers to utilize the child care facilities for educational purposes. It was required that the researcher submit to the directors of the center a request for permission to observe. The information required by the child care facilities was submitted in the form of question sheet which the classroom teacher provided for the researcher. The question sheet required information such as the date(s) and duration of the researcher's presence in the classroom.

At the outset of the data gathering process 20 hours of observations were to be collected during the morning free play time. Because the day care center is on a university campus, many undergraduate students of Education were assisting in the classroom as part of a field experience requirement. These

students were there only during the morning, as were students from other academic disciplines who were observing the children. As the data gathering process progressed, the presence of adults became an area of concern for the researcher as the adults were often drawn into the children's play. Often, in an effort to interact and facilitate play behaviors, the children's play often became adult-directed. Feeling that the adult presence was confounding the data, the observation schedule was changed in order to gather data during the afternoon free play time when fewer adults were present.

Prior to the onset of the 20 hours of data collection, five hours (one hour each day) were used to gain entry into the classroom (Corsaro, 1985). The children needed to perceive the researcher as an unobtrusive, non-authoritarian figure. It was an important part of the data collection that children were able to proceed through their interactions in a natural way, unthreatened and, ideally, unaware of an adult presence. Entry into the day care center occurred on February 2, 1987. Taking a reactive posture (Corsaro, 1985), the researcher did not initiate or encourage dialogue with the children. Many of the children did not acknowledge the presence of a new person in the classroom, perhaps because of the number of adults who visit the center daily. Occasionally the researcher was asked to perform adult tasks which were in line with the child's view of what an adult is able to do, as evidenced in the following excerpt from the February 3 field

notes. For purposes of confidentiality, the children's names have been changed. The researcher is noted as ME.

Beth (BT) is putting on her shoes.
BT (ME) "Can you tie this for me?"
ME (BT) "You will have to ask SL (the teacher) to do that for you."
BT (ME) "Are you teacher?"
ME (BT) "I'm a friend."

During the five hours which were used to acclimate the children to the researcher's presence, observations were not recorded in the presence of the children. Upon leaving the classroom, notes were recorded regarding certain areas of the classroom, any events which could be remembered, and the names of the children who participated in the observed activities. Rather than observing focal children, it was decided by the researcher that observing areas of the classroom would allow for a greater cross section of behaviors to be observed.

The classroom is composed of five activity areas. In the Fine Motor Area children played with puzzles and games designed to enhance fine motor coordination and growth. The Creative Arts Area housed an easle, a large table and a myriad of resources for artistic undertakings. In the Language Arts Area, children could listen to records or cassette tapes while reading a book or playing with objects such as Legos or beanbags. The Housekeeping Area was set up as a pizza parlor, equipped with the necessary utensils and artificial food stuffs. In the Block Area there were a variety of hollow blocks, unit blocks, and Tinker Toys. Also available, although not set up every day, was a water table.

The week following the initial entry into the classroom, the physical data gathering process began. Conscious measures were taken to ensure that the researcher's presence was not obtrusive, but was in close enough proximity to observe the interactions. Using a stenographer's note pad, the children's dialogue was recorded verbatim as a steady stream of behavior. Upon leaving the field, notes in reference to context and physical factors were added, as there was little time for such comments during the recording of the dialogue. Also used to gather a portion of the data was a Panasonic VHS Video CamCorder. The children's reaction to the video camera was much more pronounced than their reaction to the researcher's presence, as can be found in this portion of transcribed video tape collected on March 11, 1987.

IN (ME) "What are you doing over there?"
ME (IN) "I'm taking a picture."
KV (ME) "Are we gonna be on TV again?"
IN (ME) "Are you trying to take a TV shot of us?"
IN (KV) "I bet we are on TV."

The researcher's response to such episodes was minimal. The researcher found that avoiding eye contact or giving short, neutral answers proved to be sufficient. The children did not pursue the issue once their curiosities had been acknowledged, even if the acknowledgement was very brief and superficial.

The recorded field notes and 50% of the videotaped interactions were typed on a word processor in transcription format. Throughout the transcripts the children's names were coded using two uppercase letters. The adults employed

full-time by the center were also coded using two letters from their name. The adults who were present, but were not employees of the daycare center (i.e., parents, students), were noted only as AD (adult) in the transcripts. This was necessary, as there were many different adults present in the early part of the data collection, and there was a need to discriminate between the two different groups of adults. When the children's dialogue was inaudible or when there was uncertainty as to what the child had said, the words were noted inside of markers < > in the transcript.

To allow for a more thorough examination of the data, the transcripts were cut into series of exchanges and affixed to index cards labeled with the episode date, number, and area of the classroom. If necessary, appropriate contextual notes were also made on the index card. An exchange was defined as any verbal or nonverbal input which is in response to another child's input or is designed to illicit a response from the children in the play group. An exchange included input which did not receive a response. Tacit knowledge, which was a benefit of the researcher's presence in the classroom, was not ignored when the transcripts were broken down into exchanges. In order to clarify the process through which collective data (transcript) were broken down into unit data (exchange), the following are samples of exchanges that were used to provide the framework for the emergent categories of play.

Matthew (MT), Edward(ED), and Bill (BL) have been building a house in the block area.
MT (ED,VN) "We have to get the food ready."
ED (MT) "There's room for the food in here."
(Fieldnotes, Block area, 2/10/87)

LY (IN) "Can I use this now?"
IN (LY) "No, I'm needing it for a long time."
(Fieldnotes, Water Table, 2/17/87)

JN (CS) "I have a big, big, big top for my trap."
(Fieldnotes, Language Arts Area 2/23/87).

The exchanges on the cards were then sorted according to similarities and recurring behaviors. The sorting process required extensive inductive and deductive analysis, as it was an important requisite of this study that the data indicate to the researcher that which comprises that elements of children's play. It was from this sorting process that the categories utilized in the coding system emerged. In order to sort the carded unit data, the cards were placed together in piles based upon that which was occurring in the immediate exchange. The groups of sorted data which emerged had similar themes which occurred throughout each group. Each card was marked with either "C" for cooperative play or "A" for associative play, using the collective episode for the basis of determining which type of play the children were engaged in. The definitions of cooperative play and associative play were inductively derived. Definitions of play which had been used in past studies were refined to include behaviors which the participants in the study had indicated to the researcher were important elements of their play interactions. Cooperative play was defined as

an interaction between two or more children which provided the opportunity for each participant contribute to the structure and direction of an activity which was occurring to produce a mutually-agreed upon group goal. Associative play also required that each of the participants interact and contribute the the structure of the activity, but the established play goals were independently sought by each participant. The differentiating factor between the two types of play was the goal or desired outcome. Cooperative episodes were clearly evidenced by the presence of a group goal, where each child was contributing to the direction of the activity. In associative episodes, the children interacted and discussed their play, but each participant had a goal independent of the other participants.

As reoccurring behaviors surfaced throughout the sorting process, theoretical notes were made and guiding questions which emerged were used as references for establishing the parameters of each category. To sort the data, guiding questions such as "What is happening in the immediate exchange?" "Who are the participants in the exchange?" and "What is the immediate outcome of this exchange?" The unit data were sorted until it appeared that no more categories were emerging. Because the process of children's play is a valuable avenue to the understanding of their social development, the next part of the sorting and refining process required that the unit data be related back to the collective

episode in which it occurred. In order to do this, the following questions were applied to the sorted unit data: "What was happening just prior to the exchange?" "Was there an established goal?" "If the goal of the episode is known, is it a group goal or an individual goal that the child is working toward in the unit data?" "What was the eventual outcome of the collective episode?"

Eleven preliminary categories emerged from the sorting process. One of the categories which emerged early in the sorting process encompassed all role-play behaviors, another category was comprised strictly of the exchanges during which an adult was present. Further analysis and sorting of the data indicated that the interactions within the categories "role-play" and "interactions with an adult present" displayed behaviors which were the basis for the remaining nine categories. This finding indicated to the researcher that the role-play and adult present categories were not independent of the other nine categories as had been previously thought. The decision was made by the researcher to eliminate the two categories previously discussed, as the behaviors which were exhibited throughout the data could be subsumed by the remaining nine categories. Thus, the nine categories were expanded to include the behaviors which had previously been categorized separately. Extraneous factors which appeared to influence the play episode, for example adult presence or daily routine occurrences, were also included within the

parameters of each category. Entering and establishing behaviors were considered separately in the initial data sorting process. Further analysis indicated that behaviors for entry into, and the establishment of, group play often overlapped. Children sometimes used the establishment of a group goal as the basis for their entry into an interaction. Because the establishment of a group goal and new participants were found to occur simultaneously within the data, the two categories "entry" and "establishment" were considered together as one category. Thus the number of categories was narrowed to eight. The researcher found these eight categories to subsume all of the behaviors and interactions which comprised the data pool of this study. The final eight categories are presented at length in Chapter IV.

It was not intended at the outset of the study that the emergent system of coding would be exclusive and comprehensive. The behaviors which presented themselves frequently throughout the collective data have been the basis for this coding system. As a result of the emergent design of this study and the need for further research in many of the categories which surfaced, the process and methodologies expounded here lend themselves to a more extensive refining process which would entail applying and validating the coding system. As noted earlier, 50% of the videotaped interactions were used in formulating the coding system. In order to refine the exclusiveness of the

final eight categories, the remaining 50% of the videotaped interactions were reviewed and coded. The portion of the videotapes that were used to estimate the validity of my interpretations was small. It was not intended that the tapes serve as validation of the coding system.

Validating and applying the coding system are procedures which have not been a part of this study, but have not been overlooked. It is the intent of the researcher to pursue these important aspects of the research process at a later date.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The goal of this study has been to design the basis for a system for coding children's cooperative and associative free play behaviors. In sorting data and applying the questions which emerged as a result of the process described in Chapter III, many areas for concern and further investigation were found. These areas of concern must be carefully assessed and pursued before the desired system of coding can be refined to its final form. The findings presented in this chapter are the result of an analysis of the data pool which was gathered during the study described in Chapter III. The findings have been viewed by the researcher as preliminary indicators of that which is an integral part of children's free play. It is intended that the preliminary findings will provide the framework within which a system for coding will emerge.

As previously noted, cooperative and associative play behaviors were defined for the purposes of this study. The differentiating factor between the two types of play was the mutually established goal. A very important finding from the data collected in this study was that within play which was determined to be cooperative, there were immediate personal goals which each participant sought to fulfill. Traditionally, these instances of play behavior would have

one but relied upon mutual recognition of the conditions which were necessary for the goal to be met (i.e., sharing). The finding, that associative play is an integral part of cooperative play behaviors, made it virtually impossible to isolate indices of cooperative and associative play when discussing and examining them. As a result of this finding, the two types of play were grouped together under a more comprehensive and accurate heading, which was inductively derived to be social play.

Social play, as defined for the purposes of this study, is free play between two or more children in which each participant provides input which guides the play episode. Within social play there is a mutual recognition of each participant's contribution to the play episode. Goals are established by the participants and may be either collaborative group goals or individual goals. The distinguishing factor which separated social play from other types of play was that the play episode required the input and interaction of all participants. The children who were engaged in social play interacted, conversed, shared ideas and resources, and sought to meet an established goal. The eight categories which emerged from this study are the foundation for a system for coding children's social play behaviors. Much of the discussion which is presented in this chapter is focused upon the eight categories which emerged from the process of sorting data. The categories

encompass the techniques which children employ to accomplish their goals throughout episodes of social play.

Because language is one of the child's most critical tools in constructing a social world, the eight categories are comprised from a multitude of sociolinguistic interactions. It is through language that children are able to generate social action (Corsaro, 1985). As a result of children's use of language to construct social interactions, the behaviors which comprise the categories presented in this chapter were most clearly evidenced through the children's use of language, combined with nonverbal behaviors such as acts of aggression.

Sociodramatic play has been researched as a complex entity separate from other types of play (Smilansky, 1968). Sociodramatic play and role play have not been included as a distinct category within the parameters of social play. It was found by the researcher that the role play behaviors which occurred within the data pool of this study were similar to the behaviors displayed in other forms of social play. Thus, role play behaviors were subsumed by the eight categories which emerged as a result of this study. Throughout the sorting process, behaviors which occurred within the context of role play were noted on the carded unit data. The role play behaviors were then sorted along with the other behavior which was determined to be social play.

The presence of adults within episodes of observed free play throughout the data gathering process of this study has been discussed in Chapter III. It was found that the adults acted almost exclusively within two roles. Within one role, the adults acted upon their own initiative, performing adult tasks such as mediating disputes or facilitating entry for a child. An adult was also summoned by a child or was drawn into the play by the participants, and acted within a different capacity, usually as a participant, but it appeared that the adult was still recognized as such by the children. This finding does not imply that the two capacities in which adults most frequently act are independent of each other. The two roles were found to overlap, but the basis for adult-child interactions was found to be either adult-initiated or child-initiated. The presence of adults was noted on the carded unit data and the child-child categories were expanded to include adult-child interactions. This would allow within-set data analyses to be made, with regard to details such as the outcome of two similar interactions within a category, one interaction having an adult present, and the other interaction not having an adult present.

In the preliminary sorting of the unit data, a distinct category was emerging which included exclusively adult-child interactions. Further examination of the category revealed that virtually all of the interactions which were occurring

with an adult present were consumed by the eight emerging categories. Thus, social play episodes in which an adult was present were categorized together with those episodes in which the interaction was strictly child to child.

The eight categories which are discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter are the basis for a system of coding children's social play behaviors. The categories which are presented have not been refined or checked for reliability as further investigation is needed before a reliable system for coding can emerge from the categories.

I. ENTERING AND ESTABLISHING

Entering and establishing behaviors were found to be a crucial element of social play behaviors. The manner in which a child attempts to enter an ongoing interaction or attempts to establish social play within a group setting is indicative of the episode which will follow. Entering and establishing behaviors differ from each other but both appear to serve a similar purpose: to create a framework within which social play episodes can occur. Entering and establishing behaviors are the basis upon which social episodes are founded.

When entering play, a child who had not previously been a participant in a particular play episode sought to enter or join an interaction which was occurring. Data from this study have indicated that the method employed by a child

attempting to enter an interaction greatly influenced the manner in which the entry attempt was received by the other participants. The samples of entering behaviors given below present two distinct attempts at entering an ongoing interaction. In assessing children's entering behaviors, it was important to recognize that entering attempts were greatly influenced by factors other than the method that the child attempting to enter had employed. Children who were labeled as "trouble" by the other children often found that their attempts to enter were met with resistance. It was not within the parameters of this study to examine social competence as it relates to a child's attempts to enter an ongoing social interaction. Preliminary analysis of the data seemed to indicate that a child's ability to enter an ongoing interaction was influenced by the technique that the child employed to gain entry, as well as the other participants' perception of the child who sought entry. Evidence of this is provided in the following excerpt:

> Matthew (MT), Beth (BT), and Mary (MY) have been playing on the jungle gym. Edward (ED) approaches from the water table.
> ED (MY) "Can I get on there?"
> MY (ED) "Yeah."
> ED gathers some props, climbs on the jungle gym and is immediately included in the conversation. (Fieldnotes, February 12, 1987)

In another exchange, Matthew (MT), Bill (BL), and Edward (ED) have been playing in the block area for approximately 15 minutes. Beth (BT) and Mary (MY) enter the block area and begin to run up and down on a nearby ramp.

MT (BT, MY) "Get out! Only Mrs. Santa and Elves in here. Are you an elf (3X)? Get out!" (continued)
The girls continue to run up and down the ramp, while the boys build for several seconds.
ED (MY, BT) "Get out of here, beat it!"
MY (BT) "Come on, let's go."
The girls leave the area. (Fieldnotes, 2/10/87)

Rules and contextual factors were also found to influence entry into an interaction . In the following sample, Mary (MY) and Edward (ED) are painting in the Creative Arts Area. Gene (GN) approaches from the block area. An adult is present.

GN (MY, ED) "Can I play?"
AD (MY) "How many people can play at one time?"
MY (AD) "Two."
AD (GN) "Sorry, GN, only two." GN leaves the area.
(Fieldnotes, February 26, 1987)

The rule, only two people allowed to paint in the area at one time, influenced Gene's failed attempt at entry. In the excerpt presented below, an exchange similar to the previous one occurred.

Gene (GN) and Charles (CH) are playing at the water table. Kevin (KV) walks by.
KV (GN, CH) "What are you doing?"
GN (KV) "We're playing in the water table, but you can't."
CH (GN) "We're playing here. We have boats."
KV (CH) "Can I play here after you?" (continued)
CH (KV) "No, there's no more of these smocks anymore."
GN (KV) "Look, there's no more yellow things (smocks).
KV leaves the area. (Fieldnotes, February 12, 1987)

Kevin is unable to join due to the lack of an available smock. His attempt was not complete because of a variable not controlled by the occupants at the play area. The data also showed that extraneous factors (i.e., the availability

of a smock) lead to a child's uncontested entry into a play territory, but did not necessarily result in his immediate entry into the interaction that had been occurring between the participants already in that area. The conditions under which a child entered an interaction were not concretely established. A child may be invited to join, request to join, use aggression to gain entry, or may simply enter an interaction and begin using the available props. Often, children adopted a role that would allow them entry into the play interaction which was occurring. It seemed to be a successful tactic to take on the role as an "outsider"--a pet, sibling, or aggressor for example--in order to gain entry. Previous research has documented the relationship between children's speech styles and the status of the social positions they performed in role play (Corsaro, 1985). The connection between children's conception of status and the role behaviors they enact has many implications for the future study of entry into play interaction. Within role play interactions, children seem to recognize status and expectations and, as this and other research suggests, are very conscious of lines of authority within play (Corsaro, 1985). The size of the data pool from this study does not allow for an adequate assessment of the processes which accompany a child's attempt to enter an interaction or territory. As discussed in Chapter V, the complexities of entering behaviors are an area for further

study, as such behaviors are quite unfamiliar to researchers.

Establishing behaviors differed from entering behaviors in that the interactants had entered the play area, but they had not yet established the goals and direction of their play. In establishing behaviors, the children often suggested joint projects or worked to reach a mutually accepted direction for their play. Establishing behaviors generally occurred early in the play episode or shortly after a new participant had joined. Upon establishing the play goals, the interactants continued to build social structure and direct their play through the use of the behaviors noted in the other categories. A sample of an establishing behavior is provided in the excerpt below.

Matthew (MT) and Edward (ED) have been playing in the block area. Each one leaves their play for several seconds. MT goes to his cubby, ED goes to the bathroom. When they both return, which is at approximately the same time, they appear to establish a new play goal.

> MT (ED) "Hey! Want to wreck this?" MT begins to knock down block structure.
> ED (MT) "No! Hey who's wreckin this? Let's build it back up again."
> MT (ED) "Then wreck it again."
> ED (MT) "No. This is our house."
> MT (DN) "OK. Let's build it back up. We need one more block here." (Fieldnotes, 2/10/87)

Behaviors such as those displayed in the above excerpt are examples of the manner in which the children began to

establish their play goals and purposes. The manner in which the children entered and established play episodes produced a variety of verbal and nonverbal behaviors. It appears from the data that behaviors which establish a group goal or bring together a group of participants is the basis from which social play behaviors occur.

II.OWNERSHIP AND OBJECT EXCHANGE

Negotiation over objects and ownership of property are areas which create a great deal of conflict within children's social play. The data from this and other studies has indicated that children's negotiation over objects provides a basis from which children produce social organization (Newman, 1977, Stuplansky, in progress). For the purposes of this study, behaviors which occurred as a result of the children's desire to maintain or obtain ownership over a possession or territory have been categorized under the heading Ownership and Object Exchange. In seeking to meet their play goals, the participants in the study employed a variety of bargaining and negotiation methods, as well as requests, in order to gain use of resources and play props. What is implied in this finding is that in order for such behaviors to occur, children must recognize the concept of ownership.

Throughout the observed play episodes, the children shared objects, expressed requests and desires for objects,

pointed out their ownership over objects and bargained with other children over the use of objects. Ownership and the behaviors which accompany recognition of it are extremely complex. Research which looks exclusively at ownership and negotiation is scarce (Newman, 1977, Stupiansky, in progress). The data pool from this study indicated that ownership is a large component of children's social play. Although the data pool is not large enough to allow for a thorough examination of the ownership within social play, the data does indicate that problems and possibilities arise, and children must work at solving these conflicts. Studies of ownership among nursery school aged children have found that children actively construct, maintain and re-establish social episodes, during which they are continually facing disputes over ownership (Newman, 1977). Behaviors such as those cited by Newman were evident throughout the data pool of this study. The children displayed an understanding of the concept of ownership through exchanges such as those presented below.

Ingrid (IN) and Linda (LD) have been playing at the water table. LD plays with a plastic funnel, IN uses a red cup. IN puts the red cup down next to her. LD picks up the cup.

> LD (IN) "Can I use this now?"
> IN (LD) "No, no. I'm needing it for a long time."
> (Fieldnotes, February 17, 1987)

In the exchange between Ingrid and Linda, Linda has displayed recognition of Ingrid's ownership over the cup.

By asking Ingrid for use of the cup, Linda has conceded that Ingrid maintains "ownership" over the cup. Throughout their interactions, the children would often point out their ownership over possessions and territories. Many times, the child claimed ownership over an object without any prior provocation.

Attempts to resolve conflicts over ownership also surfaced throughout the data pool. Findings indicate that the children utilized bargaining and negotiation to reach a mutually agreeable outcome. An example of bargaining is displayed in the excerpt which follows. Edward (ED), Linda (LD) and Ingrid (IN) have been playing at the water table. IN is filling a plastic bottle, while LD fills a cup through a funnel.

> LD (IN) "If you let me use this for a minute, I'll let you use this for a minute." IN does not respond. (Fieldnotes, February 17, 1987)

Rationales such as those displayed by LD in the above samples appear to indicate that the children were capable of utilizing a variety of methods to reach a mutually agreeable goal. Interactions over ownership are an important element of children's play. The methods which a child employs to obtain use of or ownership over an object are quite extensive. Verbal and nonverbal gestures, such as grabbing an object or a blatent request for use, illicit discussion and reciprocal responses from the other participant(s). The implications for further study of children's interactions

which involve ownership are many. The frequency and variety of such interactions throughout the data pool of this study have indicated to the researcher that it is a crucial element of children's social play.

III. ASSISTANCE

In an effort to fulfill play goals which occurred within the context of social play, the children offered and sought assistance throughout their interactions. The helping behaviors which the children offered throughout their play were generally given freely, by one participant to another participant. In addition to offering assistance to their peers, the participants often requested assistance. A preliminary analysis of the data has indicated that most requests for help were honored by the participants of whom the assistance was requested. Research has indicated that helping behaviors are a form of prosocial behavior and are an integral part of children's free play (Bar-Tal, 1982). Data collected from this study also indicated that helping behaviors are an integral part of children's social interactions. The children often referred to the helping act, as shown in the following excerpt.

> Jane (JN) has been playing at the water table. Paul (PL) enters carrying an object that he recognizes as belonging to JN. JN tells PL what to do with the object.
> PL (JN) "Do you need someone to help? I'm your best helper."
> JN (PL) "I already have a smock on."
> PL (JN) "But I'm your best helper." (continued)

JN (PL) "This isn't very hard work, but you can help here."
"PL (JN) "I'll pump water through here." PL picks up syringe, begins to help JN. (Fieldnotes, February 17, 1987)

The offer of help, which PL has employed to gain entry indicates that PL recognizes that helping is good, and would probably be looked upon favorably by JN. Requests for assistance were also found to comprise a portion of children's social interactions. A sample of one such request is provided below.

Beth (BT) and Kevin (KV) work on individual art projects in the Creative Arts area. Between them is a bin of markers, a roll of tape, and scissors.

BT (KV) "KV, can you cut this off?"
KV (BT) "What?"
BT (KV) "Take this tape off for me."
KV (BT) "I don't have any scissors."
BT (KV) "Yes. They're right there."
KV (BT) "Oh."
KV cuts the tape.
(Field notes, March 3, 1987)

Requests for assistance which were directed from child to adult have also been placed in the category of Assistance, as the children recognized these a helping behaviors and appeared to employ similar techniques in requesting them. Further within set analysis is necessary before a more complete discussion of adult-child vs. child-child helping behaviors is possible. Further examination of the data pool may reveal differences between the types of requests made by children of adults, as opposed

to the types of assistance requests that children make of their peers.

IV. DIRECTING BEHAVIORS

The use of commands, statements or warnings which were produced to control or direct the behavior of the other interactants in an episode has been called Directing Behavior for the purposes of this study. Previous studies have examined similar behaviors and have devised a variety of characteristics to identify such behaviors (Krasnor & Rubin, 1983, Meuller & Brenner, 1977). Included within the parameters of directing behaviors are warnings which were extended from one participant to another which implied that a behavior was not socially acceptable. In his research, Corsaro (1985) found a similar use of linguistics to produce what the called imperatives. Imperatives were described by Corsaro as direct commands which are produced with heavy stress at the end of the utterance and overloud emphatic tone. The behaviors and utterances which are included within the category Directing Behavior encompass imperatives as well as commands or warnings given in a neutral tone of voice.

As the categories emerged from the unit data, many exchanges were found to include references to another child's behavior. The findings indicated that children use language to produce techniques aimed at directing

another participant's behavior. Utterances such as "you need to share"or "no jumping on the stairs" were common directives found throughout the data. The excerpt presented below illustrates directive behavior.

Edward (ED) and Matthew (MT) are climbing on blocks in the block area. ED reaches up for a decoration which hangs from the ceiling.

MT (ED) "It's fragile, don't touch it."
ED (MT) "It's fragile?"
MT (ED) "Yeah. Doo doo doo doo."
ED (MT) "OK, too fragile."
(Fieldnotes, February 10, 1987)

It has not been possible to determine extensively the function of directing behaviors. The children appeared to recognize that certain behaviors were not desired within the interaction which was occurring and employed directing behaviors to eliminate the undesirable or unacceptable. Directing behaviors were also used by the children to alert another child to unacceptable classroom and play behaviors.

V. DECLARING AND EXTENDING BEHAVIORS

The data from this study indicated that in order for participants in an interaction to establish continuity in their play, the participants employed declarative and extending behaviors. The children used declarative statements to explain to the other participants that which the particular child was doing. Statements such as, "I'm building a house" or "this will be our doorway" are

examples of declarative statements which the children used to dictate to the other participants that which was occurring within the interaction. Declarative statements were also used to clarify the function or role of an element of the play episode. In producing social activities, the children employed language to declare and clarify their contribution to the play episode.

Also included within the parameters of declaring behaviors are questions and statements which were aimed at clarifying the intention of another interactant. It is through declarative statements and clarifying questions that the children provide a basis upon which the elements of their interaction are built. Questions which were asked in order to gain a further understanding of another's actions were also included in the declaring/extending category, as a child who asked questions about another child's intention recognized the other interactants contribution to the play episode. By clarifying the intentions of the other participants, the children extended the interaction within the play group. Use of declarative statements and the extending statements which result from the declaration is shown in the excerpt provided below. Edward (ED, Kevin (KV), and Paul (PL) are building a machine from the Tinker Toys in the block area. The machine, which runs on oil, provides food for their dog.

KV (PL) "Now I'm putting oil in it (the machine)."
ED (KV) "This is the oil mover, it moves the oil."
KV (ED) "This is the oil spray."
PL (KV) "KV, this is to give the dog some food. Right now it's turned off."
KV (PL) "That's only for the machine. This is the oil sprayer. It gives the other half oil."
PL (KV) "See how dirty this got?"
(Fieldnotes, February 24, 1987)

The episode continued on, and the interactants exchanged inputs which showed their own contribution to the play goal or clarified the use, direction or function of an object.

The data indicated that the children often produced a statement or behavior which was an extension of another interactant's input. In his 1977 study, Newman stated that children maintain the coherence of their play which allows for the play process to unfold. By producing declarative and extension behaviors, the participants in the observed social interactions of this study provided continuity and coherence which contributed to the maintenance of the episode. In the following sample, a declarative statement leads to an extension behavior and the continuity of the play episode is maintained. Charles(CH), Mary (MY), and Matthew (MT) are in the housekeeping area. MT has taken on the role of grandmother, MY is the mother, and CH acting as the father. MT and CH are cooking dinner while CL bathes the baby.

CH (MT) "Oh no! Our dinner is burning! Call the fire department. Tell them to hurry!"
MT (phone) "Hello, send the fire department! Right now. Hurry!" (continued)

CH (MT) "WRR WRR WRR. The trucks are here. Here come the nice firemen."
MT (CH) "The fire is out. At least the apple pie didn't burn."
CH (MT) "We can have it for supper."
(Fieldnotes, March 3, 1987)

Charles' declarative statement, "Oh no! Our dinner is burning..." led to Matthew's call to the fire department. Even though Charles was directive in his statement, "Call the fire department," it was Matthew's extending behavior which led to the interaction involving the fire department. Further evidence of the continuity which results from declarative and extension behaviors occurs when Matthew declares, "At least the apple pie didn't burn," and Charles extends "We can have it for supper." The episode presented above also supports the researcher's finding that role play within social interactions can be subsumed by the categories which have emerged from this study.

VI. DENIAL OR OFFERENCE OF FRIENDSHIP

The data from this study shows that throughout their free play interactions, the children frequently referred to friendship, and produced behaviors which offered or denied friendship to another participant in the sample group. This category has been approached with a great deal of care, as friendship is not a behavior, rather it is a concept.

Analysis of the data pool showed that the children in the study denied or offered friendship as if it were a resource. This granting or denying of friendship was

frequently incorporated into play interactions. The extension or denial of friendship was most often employed as a technique through which one child sought to gain something from another child. If friendship was offered or denied within the context of an entering interaction, it has been considered separately from this category. From the data analysis, it has been found that the children of this study continually made references to friendship, either offering it, denying it, or establishing the conditions under which friendship could occur. The excerpt provided below has been included to show the manner in which the children incorporated the granting or denial of friendship into their social play interactions. Paul (PL), Kevin (KV), and Linda (LD) are playing at the water table. Kevin has a squirt bottle, and has been squirting water at Paul.

KV (PL) "Watch out!" KV squirts him.
PL (KV) "Stop!" PL laughs
LD (KV, PL) "Bad boys."
PL (KV) "If you do that I won't be your friend."
KV (PL) "What?"
PL (KV) "If you do that I won't be your friend."
KV (PL) "Well then I won't do it."
PL (KV) "OK."
LD (PL) "I won't do it either, so will you be my friend?"
KV (LD) "Will you be my friend?"
LS (KV) "Yeah."
PL (self) "< >."
LD (PL) "What?"
PL (LD) "I'm not talking to you."
PL (KV) "KV, if you do that, I won't be your friend."

As the episode continues, references to friendship are frequently made. The data also revealed that within social

play interactions, children form alliances against other children. This was viewed by the researcher as an extension of friendship ofference or denial. The scope of this study does not permit that friendship be examined beyond the observable behaviors which were incorporated into the children's social play.

VII. COMPARISON AND DISPLAY

Within their social play interactions, the children used language to display their personal accomplishments or to compare their own resources to another participants. Interactions within this category were similar to the interactions which comprised the declarative/extension category. The differentiating factor between the two categories has been determined to be the frame of reference from which the behavior occurred. Many times the children would display or compare their work to another child without any prior provocation. Although it is virtually impossible to tell, it appeared that the children who displayed or compared their work to another child's work were motivated by a desire for positive reinforcement. Comparison and display behaviors appear to be strictly of a personal nature, whereas the goal of declarative and extending behaviors was to contribute to the direction of the social play interaction. It was found that the children used

utterances such as, "Mine is shinier than yours," or "I can do that faster than you," to make intra-group comparisons between personal accomplishments. The data showed that the children would not pursue the display behavior any further when it was met with a response, as shown in the following samples from the unit data.

Mary (MY) and Gene have been drawing in the Creative Arts area. An adult, Sheryl (SL), is present. Prior to the exchange their had not been any indication of provocation.

> MY (SL) "This is my Grandma. It's her birthday." MY displays her painting to SL.
> SL (MY) "Did you make her a card?"
> MY (SL) "Yes. It's in my cubby. Know what I brought for show and tell? My watch. It's not a toy."
> SL (MY) "No, it's not a toy."
> MY returns to her drawing, SL assists a child in the Creative Arts area.

Display behaviors occurred within the social play setting, but appeared to be independent of interactions which contributed to the direction of the play. Although MY and GN had been sharing resources and engaging in social play, MY's display of her own accomplishment was independent of the social interaction. A preliminary analysis of data has shown that the children's use of display or comparison behaviors may be a form of what Piaget (1951) had called egocentric speech. As noted earlier, the data showed that display and comparison behaviors were produced without regard to the immediate group interaction, but rather to illicit a response to a personal resource or accomplishment.

VIII. EXITING AND CLOSING

The final category which emerged from the sorting process encompasses behaviors which lead to the end of a social episode. Behaviors included in this category were both verbal and nonverbal. The data have shown that closing and exiting behaviors were evidenced when children performed nonverbal tasks such as taking off their smocks, hanging up the finished product of their work or putting away their props. Also included in this category were behaviors which lead to the end of a play episode, but were neither verbal or nonverbal. Analysis of the unit data showed that social interactions could end as spontaneously as they began, as the children did not appear feel obligated to maintain an interaction. It was found that the children exited in four ways: they would verbally announce their intention to leave, they would give a nonverbal cue which indicated their intention to leave, they would exit the play without any marker of their intent, or they would be summoned from an interaction by an adult.

Discussions about a child's intention to leave an interaction were infrequent throughout the data. The data show that the children rarely announced their intention to leave. A more common marker of a child's departure from an interaction was a nonverbal behavior.

Adult intervention was also found to cause a substantial number of interactions to end or to be

redirected. It was found that contextual factors such as cleanup time, the need to make a plan (see discussion of High/Scope, Chapter III), or pull-out programs such as speech and hearing screenings lead to adult directed closure of a play episode. Another adult-directed end to a play episode occurred when a child was removed from the group because an adult found the child's behavior to be inappropriate. The implications for further study which are contained within children's exiting and closing behaviors are unknown to researchers. Suggestions for future research are contained in Chapter V.

Social play, as the findings presented here indicate, is a complex production of activities and learning. Social play is the setting in which children establish and experiment with the elements of peer culture. Specific experiences resulting from participation in the peer culture affect the child's acquisition of interactive skills and social knowledge (Corsaro, 1985). Various features of social play, as outlined in this study, may be linked to specific types of learning. Previous studies have identified distinct types of knowledge and interactive skills which are linked to features of child-child social play (Corsaro, 1985; Youniss, 1980; Bar-Tal, 1982; Krasnor & Rubin 1983). The emergent categories of this study serve as corroborating testimony to previous studies which recognize that the intricate features of children's social play serve a distinct and valuable purpose.

The eight categories of social play which emerged from this study and are the basis for a system for coding social play interactions. Further data collection and analysis are needed before the categories can be expanded to show the more intricate moves that the children proceed through in building social structure through their play.

From the data collected for the purposes of this study, the researcher has formulated descriptions which serve as a basis for the continuation of this study and as a basis for future research. The descriptions, which are discussed further in Chapter V have emerged as a result of the study presented here and are not applicable to all future studies of social play.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A necessary prerequisite for understanding the implications of social play is a thorough understanding of the processes which comprise it. Analysis of the data gathered in this study has shown that children engaged in episodes of social play are continually constructing, directing and maintaining social episodes. It is through the establishment of social episodes that children use verbal and nonverbal behaviors to resolve conflicts and negotiate mutually agreeable outcomes. In order to understand the organization which is produced through social play, it is necessary to further study the interactions which contribute to the maintenance of social episodes.

The eight categories of social play which have emerged from this study provide a basis for further research of children's social interactions. Within each category, a number of descriptions emerged, which should serve as a basis for further study. A hypothesis generated from this study is that a child's ability to enter an ongoing social interaction is influenced by that child's sociometric status, as perceived by peers and teachers. The category of Establishing and Entering, which was presented in Chapter IV provides the framework for further studies of a child's ability to produce social play. The elements of entering

and establishing behaviors, as well as the extraneous factors which influence them, are areas which are quite unknown to research.

Another working hypothesis which has emerged from this study is that through social play, children produce social order. In exercising the behaviors which produce this social order, children establish a systematic, rule-governed framework within within which their social play occurs. Researchers studying children's play must seek to further that which is known about the process which occurs when children engage in social play. Each element which comprises social play lends itself to more extensive studies.

Another important issue which cannot be disregarded in future studies of play is that of adult influence upon social play behaviors. Current research indicates that the development of prosocial behaviors and the establishment of peer relations are products of children's play behaviors. What has not been studied is the manner in which children's relation with their peers differ from their relations with adults. Studies which would seek to examine such issues hold many implications for early childhood educators. If educators are to nurture and support social play behaviors, future research must seek to examine the means by which support of social play behaviors can be accomplished. The findings from this and other studies seem to indicate

that adult intervention in free play episodes should be carefully executed. Future research in the area of adult influence upon children's play should seek to produce methods by which early childhood educators could provide optimal environments for social play to occur in.

It has been noted in Chapter IV that the data indicate that contextual and extraneous factors influence children's social play. Future research which examines social play within various areas of the classroom would be of unprecedented value in devising ways in which educators could enhance classroom social play behaviors. Very little is known about the influence of gender, age, and environment upon a child's social play interaction. Because very little is known about children's social play interactions, the possibilities for future research are endless. Past studies of play which have failed to recognize the process which unfolds as children build social structure are no longer acceptable. It is known that children's social interactions are a very important part of their developmental process. This knowledge alone presents researchers and educators with the immense challenge of expanding our understanding of children's social play.

CONCLUSION

The study which has been presented here indicates that the importance of children's social play behaviors has long

been understudied by researchers. There is increasing evidence which suggests that children's social play interactions are the basis upon which children build their social world. There is a growing body of research which seeks to examine children's social interaction skills and their ability to participate within a group (Gottman, 1975). In attempting to further and improve existing studies of children's social play, the need arises for a method of systematically observing the qualitative processes which comprise social play. It is the hope of this researcher that the study which has been presented here has provided a means by which other researchers can further pursue the development of a systematic coding instrument. Most importantly, it is the intention of the researcher that this study makes a contribution to the growing body of research which is dedicated to furthering our understanding of children's social play behaviors.

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY

NAME	CODED AS	BIRTHDATE	AGE (Mos.)
Gene	GN	7/82	55
Steven*	ST	3/82	59
Charles	CH	6/83	47
Jane	JN	12/82	50
Kevin	KV	4/82	58
Paul	PL	12/82	50
Matthew	MT	5/82	57
Linda	LD	2/83	48
Bill	BL	11/82	51
Mary	MY	7/82	55
Lucy	LY	8/82	54
Beth	BT	2/83	48
Daniel	DN	7/83	43
Ingrid	IN	3/82	59
Edward	ED	10/82	52
Kristine	KR	1/83	49

ADULTS

Sheryl	SL
Kelley	KN
Marcia	MC
Sharon	SN
Susan	SU

Students AD **

* Attended two days per week.
** Adults who were not employed by the Child Care center on a full time basis.

APPENDIX B

PRESCHOOL DAILY SCHEDULE

7:30 - 9:00 Arrival/Free Play Children are involved in free play. A variety of materials are available for exploration.

9:00 - 9:15 Snack

9:15 - 9:30 Planning Time Each child is given the opportunity to indicate to the teacher what he/she is going to do during work time. The child may describe what he/she is going to do and how. Children are in small groups during planning time. (Planning time gives children a structured, consistent chance to express themselves and to see themselves as someone who can act on desicions.)

9:30 - 10:15 Work Time Chilldren go to the area they chose during planning time and begin their plan. Teachers observe children to see how they perceive information, interact with peers, and solve problems - and then enter into the children's activities to encourage, extend and set up problem solving situations. Work time is busy and active for both children and adults.

10:15 - 10:30 Clean Up Children are actively involved in putting materials back where they belong.

10:30 - 10:45 Recall Time Recall time is the last part of the plan-do-review sequence. Teachers meet with small groups of children to recall and review each child's plan and work involvement.

10:45 - 11:15 Outdoors or Gym

11:15 - 11:30 Circle Time At circle time the whole group meets together with teachers for 10 to 15 minutes of playing games, singing songs, doing finger plays, learning movement games, listening to stories, etc. Circle time provides an opportunity for each child to participate in a large group, sharing and demonstrating ideas and sharing and imitating the ideas of others.

11:30 - 11:45 Small Group During this time teahcers present activities in which children participate for a set period of time. Group times in our curriculum differ from the "teacher-directed" group times common to many preschool programs in that:

* although teachers structure the activity, children are expected to contribute ideas, or to solve problems presented by the teacher.
* activities do not follow a prescribed sequence, but respond to the children's needs, abilities, interests and cognitive goals.
* individual choice and problem solving by the child is followed by the teacher extending children's ideas and actions by asking open ended questions, and by setting up problem solving situations.

11:45-12:00 Clean Up

12:00-12:30 Lunch/(Bathroom)

12:30-1:00 Quiet Time/Story Time Relaxing, "winding down"- looking at books or listening to a story in preparation for naptime.

1:00-2:30 Naptime

2:30-3:00 Wake Up Time/Quiet Activities
After children have had time to wake up, they will be encouraged to find a quiet activity (for example, puzzles, board games, books, coloring...)

3:00-3:15 Snack

3:15-5:30 Free Play-Indoor/Outdoor Activities
A variety of materials and activities are made available for exploration both indoors and outdoors.

Please Note: These are estimated times- we will remain flexible and sensitive to the children's needs each day.

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